Between *Translation* and *Traduction*
The Many Paradoxes of *Deux Solitudes*

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Several translation paradoxes underlie the writing and translation of the classic Canadian novel, *Two Solitudes*, whose very title has come to symbolize the irreconcilable gap between Anglophones and Francophones in Canada. These paradoxes reflect the intercultural nature of the book's themes, the contrary cross-readings of both the original and its translation (the book was well received by both groups for opposite reasons), the colonial position of both nascent English and Québécois literary institutions, and the absence, in both cultures, of any clearly defined horizon of expectations for literary translation. Using Antoine Berman's distinction between the actual translation (or *traduction)* of a text and the reception process (or *translation)* in the receiving culture, one appreciates the need for a more extensive analysis of the reception *(translation)* process, an analysis that looks both backwards in time to identify the hidden translation intertexts within the original text *(Two Solitudes* is in fact a *translation* of a Québec novel, *Trente Arpents),* and forward in time to clarify how a translated text can inform the more general intercultural process of *translation* between two languages.

Introduction

Undoubtedly, the first and perhaps the most striking paradox of Hugh MacLennan's canonical novel *Two Solitudes* is the curious sea-change its title has undergone in Canadian cultural history. Sometime after the novel appeared in 1945 (locating the exact moment would in itself make an interesting study), the expression "two solitudes" took on a life of its own, in both English and French, as the national metaphor for Anglophone and Francophone relations in Canada. Inspired by Rilke, the term initially expressed the love and respect that could be shared by two human beings whose fundamental desire, despite their inevitable differences, was mutual knowledge and understanding.[1] Some fifty years later, in the Canadian/Québec context, it has

come to mean the complete refusal of the other, a kind of no man's land of cultural non-communication.

How the title of a book written at the end of World War II in a spirit of reconciliation could come to symbolize the insurmountable gap separating the Anglophone and Francophone communities in Canada is indeed difficult to fathom. Like many English-Canadian writers of his generation, McLennan was anxious to rescue Canadian literature from the imperial grip, and he accordingly sought inspiration in subjects directly related to Canadian reality. Born on the East Coast of Canada on Cape Breton Island, but a resident of Montréal since 1935, he realized that one of the particularities of his young country, and perhaps its most profound characteristic, was its linguistic and cultural duality. *Two Solitudes* reflected his interest in looking more closely at this complex reality, and his conviction, which he was to qualify some thirty years later as "optimistic" that "the two solitudes were bound to come together in Canada" (MacLennan 1975: 118).

The purpose of this article is not to return to the sociological and political dimensions of what some observers have called the impossibility (and others the challenge) of Canada as a country. Rather, I would like to explore the question from a new, translation perspective, using the late Antoine Berman's distinction between the actual translation of a work *(traduction* in French) and its reception and resonance (or *translation)* in the host culture.[2] As Berman observes, the "*translation* of a literary work into another language/culture does not occur solely through its translation per se *(traduction)* but through reviews and numerous other forms of textual (or even non-textual) transformations not necessarily translative in nature. It is the sum of all of these texts and transformations that constitutes the *translation* of the work" (1995: 17). How the new text is received, some might say re-written, is therefore an important part of this *translation* process: "To truly unfold and engage in the host language and culture," Berman continues, "a translation must be supported and accompanied by critical studies and non-translative re-writings" (1995: 18). From this point of view, in the context of understanding the fate of *Two Solitudes,* it is useful to determine whether the reversal in meaning of its title and themes occurred as a result of shifts in the actual translation or *traduction* process, or whether the sea-change is more accurately related to issues raised during the novel's reception or *translation* into French.

***Deux Solitudes* and the vicissitudes of translation**

Surprisingly, and this is the second paradox in the book's history, it took eighteen years before this important Canadian novel was available in French. Furthermore, the translation appeared not in Québec, but in France. The delay was not due to any lack of interest on the part of the Québec/Canadian Francophone community or Francophone translators. According to MacLennan's biographer, Elspeth Cameron, as soon the original appeared, "French reviewers urged a translation, and several translators contacted [MacLennan] personally offering to carry this out" (1981: 193). Cameron suggests indirectly that the source of the problem may have been MacLennan's New York agent, Blanche Gregory. In her account of how she came to translate the novel, Québec translator Louise Gareau-Des Bois confirms this hypothesis, citing difficulties with MacLennan's American and English agents, the negative influence of the New York/London/Paris connection, as well as the precarious status of translation in the Québec publishing milieu. [3]

The saga of the translation is a strange mixture of persistent obstacles and happy coincidences. In 1945, through Gregory, MacLennan signed a contract for the translation with the Montréal publisher Lucien Parizeau, a choice that may reflect Parizeau's contacts with a number of French writers living in exile in New York during the war. However, as French publishers took up their activities again, the Québec publisher found himself in financial difficulties. When Parizeau declared bankruptcy three years later, as MacLennan told Gareau-Des Bois, "it seemed too late for a French translation" (Gareau-Des Bois 1994: 114). [4]

In another irony of Canadian/Québécois intercultural relations, André D'Allemagne, who would later found a political party in favor of Québec Independence, the Rassemblement pour l'indépendence nationale, wrote to MacLennan in 1952 from Paris indicating his interest in translating the book. Perhaps the changing political context dampened his enthusiasm for the project.[5] MacLennan in any event lost contact with him, and the project stalled. Caught in the London/Paris web, the author was not hopeful of finding a publisher: "My London agent has long ago given up trying to interest a Paris publisher in *Two Solitudes*" (Gareau- Des Bois 1994: 114). The difficulty, as MacLennan expressed it, was primarily commercial: "It is not easy to persuade a French firm to publish a book which is (or will be) fifteen years old by the time it reaches the French market" (Gareau-Des Bois 1994: 114).

Gareau-Des Bois, who had just graduated from the Université de Montréal with a degree

in literature, discovered the novel, quite by chance, in April 1958. The same week, reading an article in the Montréal newspaper *Le Devoir*, she learned, much to her stupefaction, that the novel had been translated into Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Czech, German and Japanese, but not yet into French. She immediately contacted MacLennan, but the author was unwilling to authorize a translation without first speaking to D'Allemagne. Again, chance circumstance intervened. Gareau-Des Bois caught sight of D'Allemagne at a Montréal bus stop. MacLennan was able to ascertain that he no longer wished to pursue the project, and agreed to let Gareau-Des Bois translate the book. However, it was up to her to find a publisher (MacLennan suggested that she try to find a Québec press), and up to the publisher to pay for the translation (Gareau-Des Bois 1994: 114). The task was not easy. Gareau-Des Bois knocked at several doors before the Montréal publisher Pierre Tisseyre agreed at least to take a look at her text, on the condition that she submit half the translation, some three hundred pages, for evaluation. In May 1959, he refused the project, ostensibly on stylistic grounds, Gareau-Des Bois's use of the subjunctive having been "found to be somewhat careless." More likely, in the translator's view, the publisher was unwilling "to rely on a young writer -- and a girl at that -- for such an important and enormous task" (1994:116).

The French adventure began in November 1960. At MacLennan's suggestion, Gareau-Des Bois met with Mademoiselle Dumat of the Éditions Spes in Paris who agreed to publish the translation. In a letter dated December 10, 1960, MacLennan gave Gareau-Des Bois the translation rights for one year, and on July 31, 1961, the translator submitted a complete translation to the French publisher. There followed a series of laborious negotiations. Particularly at issue was Gareau-Des Bois' use of French-Canadian expressions. Éditions Spes was adamant in wanting to impose standard continental usage; MacLennan sided with his translator. "After a lengthy and voluminous correspondence with the author, his agent in New York, Miss Gregory and mostly Mademoiselle Dumat" (Gareau-Des Bois 1994: 118), the translation finally appeared in Paris two years later, in December 1963. In April 1964, MacLennan participated in a book launch organized by the publisher at the Canadian Embassy in Paris. However, the book was poorly distributed in France, a situation that only deteriorated a few years later when Éditions Spes declared bankruptcy.

Two months before *Deux Solitudes* appeared in Paris, in October 1963, some extracts from the translation were published in Canada in the popular monthly magazine *Chatelaine.* In

1966 and 1967, encouraged perhaps by the publication of *Deux Solitudes*, the Montréal press HMH published a French version of two other books by MacLennan, *Barometer Rising (Le temps tournera au beau)* and *The Watch that Ends the Night (Le matin d'une longue nuit),* both translated by Québec writer Jean Simard. However, HMH Hurtubise only acquired the rights for *Deux Solitudes* in 1978, most probably as a result of the publicity generated in Montréal by the 1977 film version of the book directed by Lionel Chetwynd and produced by Harry Gulkin and James Shavik (Cameron 1981: 193). The original translation was reprinted the same year, and a new version, corrected by the translator, appeared in paperback in 1992 under the prestigious Bibliothèque Québécoise imprint at Éditions Fides.

The Francophone reception

In terms of critical reviews and the non-translative transformations that together constitute what Berman defines as the *translation* of a work, the Francophone reception of the book can be broken down into three stages. An initial salvo of Francophone reviews occurred in 1945 in the wake of the publication of the original book, followed eighteen years later by reviews of the French translation. In the early 1980s, perhaps as a result of the new HMH edition, there was renewed Francophone interest in the book, predominantly in academic circles.

In his comprehensive study of the reception of *Two Solitudes,* Antoine Sirois locates "at least a dozen reviews, including eight of the original, English text volume" (1982: 114).[6] Writing in the Montréal newspaper *La Presse,* Jean Béraud considered the novel "the most important book of our time." Roger Duhamel, in *Action nationale,* called it "one of richest and most moving works in English-Canadian literature" (quoted by Sirois 1982: 114). The general opinion, concludes Sirois, was extremely positive: "Critics drew attention to the artistic qualities of the novel: MacLennan's admirable ability to create authentic characters, his vigorous and sensual style, and the captivating plot, but most of all they emphasize the quality of his description of the two solitudes" (1982: 114, my translation). Especially praised was the cultural dimension of the book: the critics "are unanimous, with only a few reservations, in recognizing the intelligence and generosity [of the author] in his portrayal of the two communities" (Sirois 1982: 114). There was only one dissenting voice. In *Le Devoir,* Albert Alain reproached MacLennan for having given Anglophone, non-Catholic readers in Canada and the United States a false idea of Catholic, French Canada" (quoted by Sirois 1982: 115). On the whole, however,

critics “all seem to have [had] the feeling that French Canada ha[d] been finally given its due and was appreciated by English Canada” (Sirois 1982: 115).

Paradoxically, the reception of the translation, eighteen years later, was much more critical. Of the four Francophone reviews of the book, two were quite mixed. The longest, and most positive, by Jean O'Neil, appeared in the arts supplement of the Montréal newspaper *La Presse.* MacLennan was touched by O'Neil’s praise, all the more so because the reviewer had “approached the book with some scepticism and even a certain hostility” (Gareau-Des Bois 1994: 123). However, Naïm Kattan, writing in *Le Devoir,* described the book as “more of a document” than “a work of literature.” In his review in the *Montreal Star,* Jean-Éthier Blais observed that he “didn’t believe that French Canadians, from a sociological point of view, would accept the book’s conclusions” (Sirois 1982: 115).

In the handful of academic studies following the 1978 re-edition of the book by HMH, the validity of MacLennan’s portrait of French-Canadian society was questioned even more insistently. Jacques Brazeau found many failings in MacLennan’s “simplistic conception of Québec society.” There is no mention of such “village institutions” as the “municipal office, the local school, the village hotel, and the local doctor and notary public.” The village is presented in “isolation,” without any “local business,” and “Tallard’s conversion to Protestantism at the end of the book lacks credibility” (Brazeau 1982: 36-37, my translation). In short, in his view, the portrait of Saint-Marc was not “representative”, and the description of Montréal is even less so. “Too few aspects of Francophone Montréal are presented”; “Francophone society with its social, economic and political institutions is absent” (1982: 37-38, my translation). Finally, writes Brazeau, the French-Canadian family is given short shrift: “the women are absent and characters have no recourse to their larger circle of relatives” (1982: 39, my translation).

Several factors account for this reversal in the reception of *Deux Solitudes*. Sirois points to changes in the social and literary context between 1945 and 1963. Citing such journals as *La Nouvelle Relève* (1941-1948) and *Cité Libre* (1950-1966), he suggests that the intellectual elite that emerged in Québec after World War II up until the 1950s was “more open to the outside” (1982: 118). In “contrast to all periods before or since,” it was between 1945 and 1960 that the image of the Anglophone in the Québec novel was the “most favorable” (1982: 119). Québec writers could identify with MacLennan’s desire to free himself from imperial shackles and explore his own Canadian reality in his fiction. Commenting on O’Neil’s review, MacLennan

underscores this shared view: “I am totally in agreement that in general a writer should write at home[...] [O’Neil] has understood that when I wrote *Deux Solitudes*, one has to remember that Canada was not known as a country” (Gareau-Des Bois 1994:123).

By the middle of the 1960s, however, decolonization and independence were the spirit of the times, rather than cultural reconciliation. While MacLennan himself felt a certain sympathy towards the young Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) militants, he did not adopt their cause. This new, more polarized context of reception necessarily shed a different light on the book’s ending. The intercultural marriage between Paul Tallard and Heather Methuen, by which MacLennan had intended to evoke the happy reconciliation of the two peoples, was more problematic, and could easily be interpreted as an example of Anglophone assimilation.

The original as *translation*

While brief, this survey of the Francophone reception of *Two Solitudes/Deux Solitudes* serves to highlight the growing gap between the book’s themes and changing social values in Québec. More specifically, a closer look at critics’ comments on both the original and the translation suggests that what is at stake is not MacLennan’s conciliatory attitude towards Francophone culture, that is to say the theme of cultural *rapprochement* per se, but rather the validity of his representation of Québec society. In other words, what *Two Solitudes* is most criticized for is the way it translates, or rather mistranslates, the French-Canadian milieu. To return to Berman’s distinction, the novel is considered a poor *translation* of the milieu it portrays.

Indeed, and this is another important paradox of *Two Solitudes*, through its characters and themes the original is itself a translative text. Written in English by an Anglophone author, *Two Solitudes* is in fact the story of a Francophone family headed by Athanase Tallard, seigneur of Saint-Marc-des-Érables, a small village located on the north shore of the Saint-Lawrence River not far from Montréal. Entitled “1917-1918” and “1919-1921”, the first two sections of the book set the increasing tensions within the main character against life in the village under the vigilant eye of Father Beaubien, the local priest.

Tallard is caught between his respect for the traditional, Catholic values of his society and his own desire for technological progress. On the political and economic, as well as the family and religious levels, his life is one disappointment after another. As a member of the federal Parliament in Ottawa, in an effort to reconcile Anglophone-Francophone relations, he

supports his Anglophone colleagues in the vote for conscription, only to incur the wrath of his fellow Francophones. A free-thinker, he questions the authority of the village priest, even converts to Protestantism, but ends up returning to the Catholic faith on his deathbed. His family is also divided. Marius, his son from a first, unhappy marriage with a devout Francophone, is an ardent Québec nationalist. Paul, from his second, more emotionally fulfilling marriage with an Irishwoman, shares his federalist views. However, neither son really offers him the filial affection he is looking for. On the economic front as well, his efforts are to no avail. He dreams of modernizing his village by setting up an electricity generating plant on the local river, but his plan fails due to the obstinate opposition of the Church and the treachery of his associate, Huntley McQueen, an important but unscrupulous Montréal businessman.

More compressed, set for the most part in Montréal, the last two sections of the novel take place in 1934 and. 1939. The focus shifts to Athanase's son Paul Tallard, who, like his father but on a different plane, struggles to reconcile his personal goals and the expectations of his society. In order to finance his education, he plays hockey, but his real dream is to become a writer. Through John Yardley, a retired navy captain and a former neighbor of his father's in Saint-Marc, he meets Heather Methuen, whose family belongs to the Montréal Anglophone establishment. Transcending their linguistic and cultural differences, and despite the opposition of the Methuen family, Paul and Heather finally marry. The book's ending is nonetheless ambivalent. On the eve of World War II, it remains to be seen whether their intercultural marriage, and the possibility of national reconciliation it represents, will be able to withstand the great upheavals to come.

As Elspeth Cameron points out in her extensively researched biography, MacLennan was well aware of the challenge he faced in endeavoring to represent a society which, to all intents and purposes, he knew only from the outside. Although he lived in Montréal, the circles he frequented (his colleagues at Lower Canada College, a private school for children of the English establishment, and friends and acquaintances at McGill University) were almost all Anglophones. As Cameron puts it succinctly, "He was not French-Canadian; he did not speak French fluently; nor was he a Roman Catholic. How was he to go about portraying French-Canadians with even the slightest degree of credibility?" (1981: 168-169). Cameron does point out three important Francophone contacts. The first was MacLennan's only Francophone colleague at Lower Canada College, S. E. H. Péron, although, as a Protestant, Péron did not

necessarily share the opinions of the French-Canadian majority. In November 1942, MacLennan participated, along with French-Canadian writer Émile Vaillancourt, in a broadcast on Québec and the question of Canadian unity. He was receptive to Vaillancourt's presentation of why Francophones were against conscription, a deeply divisive national issue. Vaillancourt also opened his eyes to the important changes taking place in Québec at the time, and the rise of a new class of francophone engineers and businessmen.

While Athanase Tallard's enthusiasm for technology can be traced in part to Vaillancourt's ideas, the major Francophone influence on *Two Solitudes* is unquestionably *Trente Arpents,* a novel by Québec writer Philippe Panneton, under the penname Ringuet. First published in French in 1938, Ringuet's book is now considered by literary scholars to be the first French-Canadian novel to offer a realistic picture of the tensions generated in traditional Québec rural society by the forces of industrialization and urbanization. As a physician working in Trois-Rivières and Joliette in daily contact with the local inhabitants from all walks of life, Panneton had a first-hand knowledge of his fellow citizens, their customs, manner of peaking and way of thinking. MacLennan, who read *Trente Arpents* when it came out in French, and again two years later, in English translation, readily expressed his debt to Ringuet:"Had I not read *Trente Arpents*, I could never have written *Two Solitudes*" (Cameron 1981: 169). Indeed, he relied completely on the book, observes Cameron, for the "details and atmosphere of daily life in French Canada" (1981: 170), even setting his story in a fictitious village, Saint-Marc-des-Érables, in the heart of Ringuet country.

In terms of its plot structure, characters, and main themes (tensions between traditional and modern values, the role of the Catholic church, inter-generation conflict between father and son) and despite slight differences in how the latter are worked through, *Two Solitudes* readily falls into the category of what Berman would call a non-translative *translation* of *Trente Arpents.* When they met in Montreal after the publication of *Two Solitudes,* both authors expressed their debt of gratitude to each other. Although an English translation of *Trente Arpents* existed, Panneton explicitly recognized in the work of his Canadian colleague a way of bringing his ideas to the attention of the international Anglophone community. "You have brought to *Two Solitudes* an international perspective I could never have possessed, he told MacLennan, the latter recounts, "caught as I am in the narrow milieu of my own people" (Cameron 1981: 170).

***Two Solitudes:* problematic portrayal of Francophone culture**

In the original, however, this translative dimension of *Two Solitudes* is curiously discreet, to say the least, particularly in terms of the representation of linguistic difference. At stake is the arduous question of how to represent, in a novel written in English, conflicts and conversations between Anglophones and Francophones, not to mention dialogues between Francophone characters presumably speaking with each other in French.

MacLennan was aware of the complexities of such a task, and the impact on the verisimilitude and readability of his novel. Although he makes no explicit reference to *Trente Arpents*, he does use a brief "Foreword" to draw his readers' attention to the intricacies of linguistic relations in Canada:

> Because this is a story, I dislike having to burden it with a foreword, but something of the kind is necessary, for it is a novel of Canada. This means that its scene is laid in a nation with two official languages, English and French. It means that some of the characters in the book are presumed to speak only English, others only French, while many are bilingual (MacLennan 1992: Foreword).

While this statement may be understood as an implicit invitation to readers to use their imagination to compensate for the inevitable failings of a unilingual representation, it may also be simply informative. It should not be forgotten that *Two Solitudes* first appeared in 1945 in New York. Indeed, the rest of the Foreword is clearly aimed at the American public, if one can judge from the external point of view MacLennan adopts to present the paradoxical nature of linguistic duality in Canada:

> No single word exists, within Canada itself, to designate with satisfaction to both races a native of the country. When those of the French language use the word *Canadien*, they nearly always refer to themselves. They know their English-speaking compatriots as *les Anglais.* English-speaking citizens act on the same principle. They call themselves Canadians; those of the French language French-Canadians (MacLennan 1992: Foreword).[7]

Paradoxically, other than these short, albeit pertinent preliminary remarks, there are very few explicit textual traces of French in *Two Solitudes.* Francophone characters, of course, have French names (Blanchard, Dansereau, Drouin, Beaubien, Marchand, Frenette, Latulippe). Some are also given typically French nicknames or diminutives such as "P'pa" (51) or *"Minou"* (172),

although the fact that these forms-- “Pit Gendron” for Petit Gendron (21), for instance-- may reflect effects of pronunciation is not necessarily made clear to the Anglophone reader. On occasion, a French term is used: Athanase Tallard observes that several of his compatriots “were already warmed by *whiskey blanc*”(21).

In a few very rare cases, Francophone characters display a slightly gallicized syntax in English. At the beginning of the book, Athanase explains to his Anglophone guests that his wife “was in bed with grippe and he must see how she was. It was a great pity, her illness” (11). When Marius speaks, presumably in French, to his girlfriend, Emilie, she replies in somewhat approximate English, “I guess maybe you go back to college, no” (227). Generally speaking, however, even in dialogues between Francophone characters, the novel contains relatively few French expressions.

MacLennan’s main technique for reminding the reader of the implicit linguistic duality underscoring the novel is simply to have the narrator, or a character, make a direct reference to language. Since such comments are most frequent in contexts where both linguistic groups are present, it is curiously in these bilingual, as opposed to unilingual French situations that the francophone “other” is most visible. As somewhat neutral territory, the village store offers several examples. The narrator describes the products aligned in “a strange mixture of French and English: *La Farine Robin Hood, Black Horse Ale, Magic Baking Powder, Fumez le tabac Old Chum*” (4). Reference is made to the bilingual signage: “Lately Drouin had put up signs which he felt would help the public to understand better what he sold. In raised white letters on one window were the words *Epiceries* and *Groceries*; on the other *Magasin general* and *General Store*” (58). At times, the narrator reminds us that some characters are actually speaking in French: “Get a chair, Jacques; Prouin said in French” (146).

Such comments also occur in more confrontational settings where they serve to emphasize changes in cultural, social or political perspective from one group to the other. Underlining the economic inequalities associated with linguistic difference, Marius Tallard observes that “all the poor I met were French” (159). In a visual reminder of each groups’ opposing views towards conscription, he is struck by the contrast between two posters on the war effort: “Lord Kitchener beckoned from one of them, saying in English: I WANT YOU. Beside him a man with a sad expression asked: AVEZ-VOUS AUSSI DE LA PEAU MORTE?” (53).

Nor does MacLennan hesitate to use such linguistic remarks to dramatic effect. When

Marius is arrested because he has refused to be conscripted, the narrator provides the linguistic identity of his captors: “Marius was asleep when the English sergeant and the French plainclothesman flashed their electric torches on him[...] A voice said in English, “It’s him, all right” (181). Similarly, MacLennan uses linguistic details to foreshadow Athanase’s final reversion to Catholicism, having him speak in French to his second wife, as though he was back again with his first spouse, the devout Catholic Marie-Adele: “Then, after at least a minute, he said in French, ‘Take my hand!’” (237).

While such indications are consistent with a certain cultural or dramatic effect, others appear less logical. Where one would expect a reference, such as the title to Dumas’ famous novel, to be given in French, for instance, MacLennan surprisingly sticks to English: “Paul had taken two books to bed with him. One was *The Three Musketeers* in French, the other *Treasure Island* in English” (172). Oddly enough, the character whose French is the most commented upon is also the most Francophile of all the books’ English characters. Captain Yardley, an Anglophone friend of Athanase Tallard, always pays his bills in cash (no doubt a subtle reference the Canadian stereotype of Scottish customs}, and “spoke French, but with a terrible grammar and a queer accent mixed with many English words… worse than an Indian Polycarpe Drouin said” (21).

The translation as “original”

Combined with MacLennan's approach to the main themes of the book, these limited and ambiguous traces of the French other, at once visible but for the most part effaced, do little to improve the effectiveness of *Two Solitudes* as a *translation* of *Trente Arpents,* and no doubt contributed to the poor Francophone reception of the original. However, confusing as they may be for the readers of the English novel, such linguistic markers become an almost impossible challenge in the French translation. The dialogues between Francophone characters have to be reconstructed in their “original” French, the registers they would have used must be carefully identified and replicated, the narrator’s and characters’ linguistic comments must be repositioned according to the new context. In short, the translator has to dig behind the English *translation* to find the initial “original”, while at the same time keeping in mind her text will be published not in Québec but in France.

In this complex crisscrossing of linguistic signs, Gareau-Des Bois has given priority, for

the most part, to keeping the text realistic and credible for her Franco- phone readers. She has reintroduced Québec oral speech patterns in the dialogues between Francophone characters. Respecting differences in social status and register, she has chosen a range of expressions from both international – "m'sieu le curé (MacLennan 1963: 36) [8] - and Québec French. In contexts such as the General Store or when Marius is speaking to Emilie, she opts for typically Québécois syntax and expressions: "Et pis, Paul, quoi de neu'" (100), 'I's se sont rendus che Étienne Laflamme et z-ont pris Napoleon. I's ont été le qu'ri dans son lit" (101), "Tabernacle" (101). On occasion, spelling changes are introduced to reflect Québécois pronunciation: "Cest de ça qu'alle revenait pas" (101). On the other hand, the narrator's speech is left in standard French, in accordance with publishing practices in Québec at the time.[9]

As for the Anglophone characters, those who use Standard English in the original speak standard French in the translation. For those whose English is nonstandard, however, the situation is more complex. Captain Yardley's situation is particularly problematic. His English is a dialect from the Canadian Maritime Provinces. While his spoken French, as MacLennan indicates, is poor, he nonetheless makes a sincere and enthusiastic attempt at communication, in keeping with his openness to the cultural other. To remain faithful to the non-standard dimensions of his English, Gareau-Des Bois has him speak a variety of French from the Québec region at the mouth of the Saint-Lawrence River, a kind of maritime echo of his Nova-Scotian English: "Mêts-toè pas tête que j'trouve à me plaindre de quèque chose. Monsieur! *Y* faudrait êt' un fou du Bon Guieu pour avoir eu ane vie comme moè et pas apprécier sa chance" (470). In the passages where he is conversing with Francophone characters, at the General Store, for instance, and where logically he would be using his imperfect French, Gareau-des Bois sprinkles the regional Québec dialect with English words.

This strategy has the advantage of differentiating the Captain's speech from that of his fellow Anglophones by reproducing the non-standard dimension of his speech in the original English text. Its effect in French, however, is equivocal at best, if not contradictory. From the linguistic point of view, the Captain appears, paradoxically, to be more 'Francophone' than the Québécois characters. Another character in the book, Clayton Henry, poses a similar problem. In this case, the translator's decision to represent the American accent shown in the original by sprinkling some colloquial French-Canadian expressions throughout Henry's conversations, lending him a Francophone appearance, is again confusing for the Francophone reader.

Often a very difficult task, translating social and regional dialects can border on the untranslatable. In the linguistic and cultural system of the target language, some choices can produce ambiguous, if not contradictory effects. In the Parisian context, Gareau-Des Bois's decision to integrate a rural Québécois vernacular was certainly an audacious one, given the "French tradition of non-representing sociolects" (Chapdelaine 1994: 12, my translation). [10] There was, in fact, considerable resistance to this choice on the part of her publisher, les Éditions Spes, who felt compelled to add a "Publisher's Note" at the beginning of the translation. MacLennan's text is described as a "'novel': "written in English," about characters living in Canada, "a country with two official languages, English and French" ("Note de l'éditeur;" my translation). Undoubtedly, for the benefit of readers in France, the note also includes the following remarks on the use of Québec expressions throughout the text:

> In certain dialogues, to retain the flavor so particular to the French Canadian way of speaking, the translator has felt obliged to maintain as is such words or expressions that, with the same intention, the author has himself included in the English version. In such cases, a footnote has been added at the bottom of the page to clarify the meaning ("Note de l'éditeur," my translation).

Given how commonplace the terms are (most are in fact from international French) and especially how rare French expressions are in the original, such a note is rather surprising, all the more so when one observes that the expressions warranting a footnote are almost always words used in English in the original, or Québécois terms introduced by the translator. Only on a few rare occasions do they refer to words already in French in the original. For instance, the Québécois term "robineux," which the translator uses to translate "loafers" is described as follows in a footnote: "Hobos generally found in certain parks given to drinking 'la'robine,' a kind of alcohol for external use only or Rubbing Alcohol. Hence the name." (94, my translation, except for the term, "Rubbing Alcohol" which appears in English in the French text). Other footnotes serve to explain the meaning of a term left in English in the translation, such as "Lee-Enfields" identified as "military firearms" (323). Far from being rigorously accurate, such recourse to the authority of the author to explain or justify (if not excuse) the presence of French-Canadian expressions in the translated text is more likely simply a way of forestalling any criticism the text might incur from French readers unaccustomed to Québécois colloquialisms.

Clearly, the French institutional context in which the translator worked did not improve

the reception of the book in Québec. However effective, or legitimate, such a footnote strategy may have been in France, in Québec it could only be seen as inappropriate, if not irksome. Furthermore, the negative effect undoubtedly increased over time. In the early 1960s, Québécois writers themselves tended to use Québec expressions or *canadianismes* sparingly and for the most part in dialogues. However, by the 1980s, Québec French of all registers had become the norm in Québec literary works, and Québec readers were well accustomed to reading texts in French-Canadian slang or *joual.*

Similarly, while consistent with certain translation practices giving priority to the letter of the text, the decision to use a marked variety of Québec French to represent the marked English speech of Yardley and Henry in the original text was also problematic. Although the translator's intentions may have been laudatory, by increasing the confusion between Francophone and Anglophone characters such translation strategies may well have had a negative impact on the Francophone reception of the novel, by undermining the validity of *Deux Solitudes* as a representation of Francophone society. This remains nonetheless a hypothetical explanation; the question is not commented upon directly in the book reviews. Finally, it should be noted that readers' expectations of the translation were all the greater in so far as the translator's unacknowledged task was to reconstruct a pre-English, French "original."

Conclusion

Based on how the French translation was received, it would appear that the *translation* of *Two Solitudes*, to return to Berman's terminology, faced essentially two main challenges. The first is a system-level problem related to the particular structural weaknesses of Canadian publishing, in both English and French, at the time. It should be remembered that the original novel first came out in New York, and that the negotiation of translation rights was in the hands of MacLennan's American and British agents. Notwithstanding a first, poorly managed arrangement with the Québec publisher, Éditions Lucien Parizeau, the effect of this situation was to give priority to French, rather than Québec presses. Indeed, the influence of the American publishing milieu was such that it was only with his third novel, *The Precipice,* which appeared 1948, that MacLennan was able to negotiate a separate contract with a Canadian publisher, Collins, for the Canadian publication rights (Cameron 1981: 213-214).

In the case of *Deux Solitudes,* the most immediate consequence of the colonial status of

Canadian publishing was to prolong unduly the inevitable delay between the publication of the original and that of its translation. The result of this delay, given the important sociopolitical changes that took place in Québec society between 1945 and 1963, was to transform radically the sociopolitical context in which the translation was received in the target culture. Furthermore, the dominant position of the French publishing milieu also substantially affected editorial, and especially translation strategies. There again, the effect was far from neutral on the way the translation was received, since these strategies undermined the verisimilitude of the translated work as a representative portrayal of French-Canadian society.

To this structural difficulty must be added another problem related to the social and cultural status of both literary and non-literary translation in Québec. From this point of view as well, the eighteen years intervening between the printing of the original novel and the publication of the translation were to see dramatic changes, again to the detriment of the reception of *Deux Solitudes.* To return to Berman's distinction, the first step in the Francophone *translation* of *Two Solitudes,* was not, as one might regard as the usual case, the reception of the translated text, but rather Francophone readings of the original. At the end of the 1940s, translation was not the principal means of access, among the Québec francophone elite at least, to English-Canadian literary works, nor was translation itself necessarily perceived negatively. By the time Gareau-Des Bois published *Deux Solitudes,* however, translation had become clearly identified, in Québec anti-colonial discourse, as an instrument of English domination. As early as 1957, the Québec linguist and militant Pierre Daviault pointed out how "devastating the influence of translation was" for a culture exposed on a daily basis to the English language and American culture (quoted by Simon 1994: 43, my translation). Such a change in the social and political perception of translation from English to French could not fail to affect readings of literary translations into French at the time.[11]

Finally, surprising as this may be in view of the themes and importance of *Two Solitudes,* although the expressions "two solitudes" and "deux solitudes" have prospered in their respective languages in Canada, the intercultural dimensions of the novel itself and how it functions both as *traduction* and *translation* have received surprisingly little scholarly interest.[12] The fact that Translation Studies is still relatively new as a discipline is certainly a contributing factor, but much of the explanation undoubtedly lies in the institutional difficulties faced by Comparative Literature in Canada. In a postcolonial context, the priority for both Canadian and Québécois

literature has been the creation of their own independent institutions, rather than the promotion of intercultural exchange. As a result, translation has been slow to stake out its own place within each literary institution.[13] This is reflected in the absence of a specific horizon of expectations for literary translations in Canada. In this respect (and this may be its most profound paradox), by its title alone, and despite the inversion of the meaning of the expression, *Two Solitudes* has been itself a remarkable stimulus for the production and reception of literary translations, as Montréal publisher Pierre Tisseyre's Deux Solitudes collection so aptly illustrates. The singular destiny of MacLennan's book, it would seem, has been to create, through both its textual and non-textual translative transformations, albeit over some five decades, the conditions necessary for a more substantial analysis and a better understanding of its own functions as both *traduction* and *translation.*

Notes

1. The term "two solitudes" comes from an observation Rilke made on marriage in a letter dated May 14, 1904 and addressed to his friend Franz Xaver Kappus (Cameron 1981: 172).
2. As this distinction cannot be expressed as succinctly in the English language, for the purposes of this article, I will on occasion use the two French words in italics.
3. This same New York/Paris connection also played a role in the post-war period for another Canadian novel, Gabrielle Roy's *Bonheur d'occasion.* In that case, the Francophone novel was first translated into English in New York by an American, Hannah Josephson, before winning a prestigious French literary prize, the Prix Fémina, in 1947 (cf. Godard 1999).
4. Gareau-Des Bois quotes MacLennan when setting Parizeau's bankruptcy in 1948. In a detailed analysis of the publisher's activities, Sylvie Bernier notes that it occurred in 1946, and this is more consistent with the resulting abandonment of the translation project (1991: 58). It is possible that MacLennan had the impression that Parizeau might resume activities, or he may have had some reservations about a French translation that only further archival research could clarify. What is certain is that the Québec publishing milieu was under considerable financial strain in the post-war period as French publishers resumed their activities (cf. Michon 1991).
5. Unfortunately, it is not possible to put this question to the translator himself, as André

d'Allemagne died on February 1, 2001 at the age of71.

6. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Sirois are given in my translation.

7. All subsequent quotations from *Two Solitudes* are from this edition.

8. All subsequent quotations from *Deux Solitudes* are from this edition.

9. For a more detailed analysis of the way popular Québec French has been transcribed and represented in Québec literary texts, see Whitfield and Lessard 1991, 1992.

10. In linguistic terms, a sociolect can be defined as “any language particular to a (sub) group in society” (Chapdelaine and Lane-Mercier 1994: 7, my translation).

11. The increasing sense of linguistic security among Québec Francophones and a more structured approach to translation have contributed to a change in Francophone attitudes towards translation·(cf. Bouchard 2002).

12. In her presentation of the proceedings of the MacLennan Conference held in 1982 at the University of Toronto, Elspeth Cameron in fact suggested how relevant a Translation Studies approach might be: “much critical sleuthing in the troubled territory of translation and the exciting field of *Rezeptionskritik* could uncover much of interest to both founding cultures” (1982: xvi).

13. Two recent volumes on contemporary Francophone and Anglophone literary translators shed much light on the institutional dimensions of the history and practice of literary translation within Canada *(*cf. Whitfield 2005a. 2005b).